



COMDTINST 1742.3I
27 SEP 1999

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1742.3I

Subj: FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Ref: (a) Personnel Manual, COMDTINST M1000.6(series)
(b) DoD Voting Assistance Guide (0001 VAG)

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction promulgates information about the Federal Voting Assistance Program and implements the Coast Guard Voting Assistance Program in accordance with the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) (42 USC 1973). This Instruction is for the use of all active duty Coast Guard members and their dependents. It encourages personnel to actively participate in the federal, state, and local electoral process of their home states.
2. ACTION. Area and district commanders, commanders, maintenance and logistic commands, commanding officers of headquarters units, assistant commandants for directorates, Chief Counsel, and chiefs of special staff divisions at Headquarters shall ensure compliance with the provisions of this Instruction.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. Federal Voting Assistance Program, COMDTINST 1742.3H is canceled.
4. BACKGROUND.
 - a. The Federal Voting Assistance Program is a continuing federal effort to assist eligible voters in registering and voting by absentee process and in person in their home state primary, general, and special elections and national elections.

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- b. Chapter 16 in reference (a) establishes general policies and fixes responsibility for administering this program in the Coast Guard. Reference (b) provides specific information for unit Voting Action Officers' use in conducting unit-voting efforts.
- c. Responsibility for coordinating the Coast Guard Voting Assistance Program is vested in Commandant (G-WPM-1). To reach the Coast Guard Voting Action Officer, call (202) 267-1636 or FAX at (202) 267-4823. Additionally, calls made to the Voting Information Center (VIC), (703) 588-1343, may be directly transferred to the Coast Guard Voting Action Officer. The VIC also provides information on upcoming elections and various candidates recorded messages, often specifically directed toward the military member.
- d. Enclosures (1), (2), and (3) provide specific information about the 2000-2001 voting season.

Encl: (1) Voting Action Plan
(2) 2000-2001 Phased Program Schedule
(3) Voting Information Support Plan

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VOTING ACTION PLAN (2000-2001)

- A. PURPOSE. To implement the Federal functions of the Uniformed and Overseas Absentee Voting Act, disseminate information and guidance, and coordinate tasks related to the Voting Program.
- B. OBJECTIVES. To ensure that voters are provided all necessary voting information, including voting age requirements, election dates, offices to be elected, constitutional amendments, other ballot proposals, and absentee registration and voting procedures:
- 1 Members of the U.S. Armed Forces or uniformed services in active service;
 - 2 Spouses or dependents of (1.) above;
 - 3 U.S. citizens temporarily outside the United States.
- C. TASKS.
- 1 The Director, FVAP will:
 - a. Coordinate all aspects of the Federal Voting Assistance Program.
 - b. Advise all executive branch departments and agencies concerning federal, state, and local election laws and procedures.
 - c. Assist eligible persons to register and vote.
 - d. Publicize the right of citizens to register and vote.
 - e. Review and coordinate the informational and educational effort directed toward all persons covered by the UOCAVA.
 - f. Provide information on elections, candidates, and issues. Operate the DoD Voting Information Center (VIC) in a nonpartisan manner.
 - 2 The American Forces Information Service will:
 - a. Coordinate with the Director, FVAP all aspects of information for release, including: radio, television, and print media materials.

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- b. Provide other information support as required.
 - c. The Armed Forces Information Service (AFIS) will conduct special multi-media activities emphasizing registering for and voting in primary and general elections both in the United States and overseas.
- 3 Commandant (G-WPM-1) will:
- a. Ensure clear channels of communication are maintained to expedite all voting information down to the unit level.
 - b. Direct internal information media to publicize all 2000 and 2001 Federal Voting Assistance Program aspects.
 - c. Coordinate distribution of voting assistance materials for Voting Assistance Officers use at all command levels through the Department of Transportation Initial Distribution Section.
 - d. Ensure Voting Assistance Officers are aware of procedures to obtain additional materials and assistance.
- 4 Unit Commanding Officers will:
- a. Ensure that unit Voting Assistance Officers provide adequate briefings, training, or information periods devoted to registration and voting procedures prior to primary elections.
 - b. Ensure that these sessions are available to spouses and eligible dependents.
 - c. Ensure that incoming personnel are provided voting information and departing members are advised to notify election officials of their new address.
 - d. Monitor internal information media to ensure that voting information is available to all eligible voters.

2000-2001 PHASED PROGRAM SCHEDULE

A. **Phase I.** Preparation and initiation during the period of 1 November 1999 - Spring 2000

- 1 Commandant (G-WPM) will disseminate the Federal Voting Assistance Program Action Plan 2000-2001 to all commands and ensure distribution of voting information which is available prior to publication and distribution of the 2000-2001 Voting Assistance Guide and any changes thereto.
- 2 Units will develop and implement Command Voting Action Plans for the 2000 elections.
- 3 Unit Voting Assistance Officer (VAO's) shall ensure procurement and distribution of Federal Post Card Applications (FPCA's) and Federal Write-In Absentee Ballots (FWAB's), which are purchased through the General Services Administration/Federal Supply & Services (GSA/FSS), General Products Center, 819 Taylor St. Ft Worth, TX 76102, telephone number (817) 978-2508.
- 4 MLC Compliance Staff shall review command voting assistance programs and plans and assure unit voting assistance officers are appointed and trained and have sufficient supplies to provide voting assistance.
- 5 Information efforts shall begin with commanding officers and voting assistance officers conducting command information programs prior to primary elections and repeating, as necessary, to inform and motivate military personnel and their family members to exercise their right to vote in primaries and general elections. Family members will be encouraged to participate in these programs.

B. **PHASE II.** Registration and Primary Elections occur during Period of January-October 2000. This phase will require careful planning and execution of voting assistance programs in order to inform potential voters of the primary elections scheduled to begin in early 2000.

- 1 VAO's shall concentrate on providing absentee registration and voting assistance to personnel for federal, state and run-off primary elections.
- 2 VAO's shall ensure procurement and distribution of FWAB's for use by citizens in overseas areas and on Coast Guard cutters. The FWAB may be used only for the general election (federal offices) under conditions specified in the 2000-2001 Voting Assistance Guide. Some jurisdictions may allow use of the FWAB for state and local elections by all absentee voters, but only under specified conditions which are announced by the Federal Voting Assistance Program, if and when authorized, or as specified in the 2000-2001 Voting Assistance Guide.

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- 3 VAO's shall ensure IN-HAND delivery of FPCA's to personnel overseas by 15 August 2000.
- 4 Commanding Officers shall conduct "Armed Forces Voters Week" (week of 3 September to 9 September 2000) and "Overseas Citizens Voters Week" (week of 25 June to 1 July 2000); develop programs to support the objective of creating an awareness and motivation to participate in the general election; and publicize the importance of early action on the part of the voter in order to obtain a ballot for the general election well in advance of election deadlines.

Note - In many cases, a separate FPCA request must be submitted for a ballot for the general election.

- 5 VAO's shall continue command information programs and dissemination of voter information.

C. **PHASE III.** Requesting Ballots for the General Election During Period of August-7 November 2000.

- 1 VAO's will continue disseminating voting information.
- 2 VAO's shall ensure IN-HAND delivery of FPCA's to personnel within the United States by 15 September 2000.
- 3 VAO's will ensure they know how and when to use the FWAB and recommend its use if the voter meets the criteria and does not receive the regular absentee ballot in sufficient time to vote and return it to be counted.

D. **PHASE IV.** Evaluation During the Period of 30 October - 31 December 2000.

- 1 VAO's shall participate in and assist, as requested, with post-election surveys of military members and overseas civilian employees. The survey's findings will be used in formulating plans for future voting assistance programs, and as a part of the Sixteenth Report on the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

VOTING INFORMATION SUPPORT PLAN (2000-2001)

A. PURPOSE. Inform the Coast Guard of the coordinated schedule to disseminate multi-media voting information for the 2000-2001 elections. The Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) will coordinate media materials produced or distributed to support the Voting Action Plan, 2000-2001.

B. OBJECTIVES.

- 1 FVAP will provide voting assistance officers at all command levels with information about the 2000 and 2001 primary and general elections so that they can assist interested voters in their command.
- 2 FVAP will plan and conduct a multi-media internal information program to reach all eligible voters, both active duty and their eligible spouses and dependents.
- 3 FVAP and Commandant (G-WPM) will provide information through appropriate channels to ensure all commands are aware of the availability of voting assistance for Coast Guard personnel.
- 4 FVAP and Commandant (G-WPM) will ensure that Coast Guard units are aware of informative materials produced and procedures to obtain them.
- 5 Commanding Officers will stress "Armed Forces Voters Week" (week of 3 September 2000) and Overseas Citizens Voters Week" (week of 25 June 2000) in conducting voting assistance activities.
- 6 FVAP will systematically release materials in accordance with the phased program outline to ensure that all eligible voters are aware of voting procedures.

C. PHASED PROGRAM SCHEDULING.

- 1 Phase I - 01 November 1999 - Spring 2000. The Director, FVAP will publish the 2000-2001 Voting Assistance Guide, distribute information and other motivational posters developed for 2000, and operate the DoD Voting Information Center.
- 2 Phase II - 01 January-October 2000.
 - a. The Director FVAP will:
 - (1) Prepare voting information on state and local primary elections;
 - (2) Continue operation of the VIC.

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- b. Commandant (G-WPM-1) will monitor command information media ensuring information is being made available to eligible voters, providing assistance as requested including providing notification of DoD sponsored training classes for Voting Assistance Officers.
- c. Unit Commanding Officers will provide at least one briefing, training, or information period devoted to registration and voting procedures, ensuring these sessions are made available to spouses and dependents, and that incoming personnel are provided guidance if they arrive in a unit after the briefing is conducted.

3 Phase III - August - 7 November 2000.

- a. The Director, FVAP will continue to release information on elections and operate the DoD VIC.
- b. The AFIS will:
 - (1) Intensify print media to inform all eligible voters of deadlines for registration and request absentee ballots; and
 - (2) Publicize "Armed Forces Voters Week" (week of 3 September 2000), making the shift in emphasis from voting in the primary elections to voting in the November 7, 2000, general election.
- c. Commandant (G-WPM-1) will continue to support individual commands.
- d. Unit Commanding Officers will:
 - (1) Plan and publicize local "Armed Forces Voters Week" activities utilizing local "on" and "off" base community groups to generate support;
 - (2) Continue to monitor command information media to ensure voting information is being made available on a timely basis.

D. LIST OF INFORMATION SUPPORT MATERIALS AND SERVICES.

- 1 FVAP World Wide Web Home Page. Located at <http://www.fvap.ncr.gov>, the page provides an overview of the FVAP as well as electronic access to many of the materials listed in this section. In addition, this site provides election information, election results and links to state government home pages and other sites with election information.
- 2 2000 - 2001 Voting Assistance Guide. (0001VAG).

- 3 Posters. The 2000-2001 voting posters will be available for use by the Armed Forces, State Department, and other government agencies. Initial requirements for posters will be coordinated by FVAP with DoD components and other government agencies. Distribution is made through normal supply channels. These posters will also be available for sale to the public through the Government Printing Office.
- 4 News Articles and Features. News and feature articles on the Voting Assistance Program 2000 - 2001, emphasizing primary elections, "Armed Forces Voters Week," and the general election, will be released to all media.
- 5 DoD Voting Information Center (VIC). The DoD Voting Information Center will be in operation 24 hours a day providing news and information on elections, candidates and issues. Anyone may call the VIC on DSN 425-1343, (703) 588-1343 or any of the toll free numbers found in this section, paragraph 11, Ombudsman Service.
- 6 Voting Information News (VIN) Newsletter. The VIN is a monthly publication that is primarily distributed to all Voting Assistance Officers. The newsletter contains information on elections and other voting-related matters of interest to citizens covered by the UOCAVA. VIN should be distributed as extensively as possible throughout your organization. Voting Assistance Officers are encouraged to extract information from VIN and copy articles for internal media use.
- 7 How To Do It! Vote Absentee Brochure. Geared toward both military and civilian audiences, this pamphlet answers many of the most frequently asked questions about the absentee voting process.
- 8 Communicating With Your Elected Officials Brochure. This publication lists incumbents in the current Congress as well as State Governors in all 55 states and territories. The pamphlet includes the names, addresses, phone numbers, and if available, the fax numbers and electronic mail addresses of these incumbents as well as general information to facilitate correspondence with them.
- 9 Video Training Tape. The FVAP produces and distributes a video training tape, which contains valuable information on how to assist potential voters. One version of this tape focuses on the duties and responsibilities of Voting Assistance Officers in the Armed Forces, while another version is geared towards Voting Assistance Officers at U.S. Embassies/Consulates as well as civilian organizations of overseas citizens.
- 10 Federal Voting Assistance Program Electronic Transmission Service. The FVAP provides the Electronic Transmission of Election Materials Service. If a state allows the electronic transmission of election materials, a military or overseas citizen may electronically transmit the FPCA for registration/ballot request, receive the regular blank absentee ballot by fax, return the voted.

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ballot by fax, or any combination of these three. The FVAP also makes available Electronic Transmission Manuals to Voting Assistance Officers and Local Election Officials to assist them in using this service. If a state allows transmission by faxing, all voting materials must be transmitted only through the following numbers: (703) 693-5527 or (800) 368-8683.

- 11 Ombudsman Service. The Federal Voting Assistance Program provides an Ombudsman Service for both the voter and local election officials to resolve problems which cannot be solved locally or answers questions concerning procedures for registration and ballot requests, including timely receipt of ballots. With the international toll-free numbers contained on the inside back cover of the 2000 - 2001 Voting Assistance Guide, citizens and local election officials may call for assistance. The number for citizens in the United States is 1-800-438-VOTE (8683). Assistance is available during normal business hours, Eastern Time, or a recorded message may be left at other times.

The following numbers for Ombudsman assistance may be dialed directly from the individual countries to reach the FVAP. No cost is incurred by the caller. They should be dialed exactly as they appear here, without affixing prefixes for international calls.

Country	AT&T Code		
Antigua	1-800-872-2881	Greece	00-800-1311
Australia	1-800-881-011	Hungary	00 * 800-01111
Bahamas	1-800-872-2881	Indonesia	001-801-10
Bahrain	800-001	Ireland	1-800-550-000
Barbados	1-800-872-2881	Israel	1-800-944-944-949 or 1-800-922-22-222 or 1800-933-33-333
Belgium	0-800-100-10	Italy	172-1011
Bermuda	1-800-872-2881	Japan KDD	005-39-111
Brazil	000-8010	Japan IDC	0066-55-111
Canada	1-800-225-5288	Korea, Republic of	0072-911 or 0030-911
Chile	800-800-311 Or 800-800-288	Liechtenstein	0-800-890011
Easter Island	000-311	Luxembourg	0-800-0111
China PRC	10811	Malaysia	1-800-80-0011
Hong Kong	800-96-1111	Mexico	01-800-288-2872 or 001-800-462-4240
Colombia	980-11-0010	Monaco	800-90-288-0
Costa Rica	0-800-0-114-114	Netherlands	0800-022-9111
Denmark	8001-0010	Netherlands Antilles	001-800-872-2881
Dominican Rep	1-800-872-2881	New Zealand	00-911
Finland	9800-100-10	Norway	800-190-11
France	0800-99-00-11	Panama	109
Germany	0130-0010	(Canal Zone)	281-010

Philippines	105-11	Taiwan	0080-10288-0
Portugal	05017-1-288	Thailand	001-999-111-11
San Marino	172-1011	Trinidad and Tobago	0800-872-2881
Singapore	800-0111-111	United Kingdom	0500-89-0011 or 0800-89-0011
Spain	900-99-00-11	United States	1-800-225-5288
Sweden	020-795-611	Uruguay	00-410
Switzerland	0-800-890011		

- 12 Coast Guard Voting Action Officer. The Coast Guard Voting Action Officer is available at Commandant (G-WPM-1), (202) 267-2239, fax (202) 267-4823.
- 13 The Director Federal Voting Assistance Program can be contacted at:

**Director Federal Voting Assistance Program
Office of the Secretary of Defense
Room 1B457, Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1155**

For telephone inquiries call: (703)588-1584 or the FVAP Ombudsman Service, 1-800-438-8683. E-mail address is: vote@fvap.ncr.gov, World Wide Web Home Page: <http://www.fvap.ncr.gov>, and the fax number is (703)588-0108.